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From the Modern Girl to Traditional Chinese Landscapes: Lang Jingshan's Art Photography in Republican Shanghai (1911-1949)

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From the Modern Girl to Traditional Chinese Landscapes: Lang Jingshan's Art Photography in  
Republican Shanghai (1911-1949)

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in Art History

by

Chuqing Zhang

Dissertation Committee:  
Associate Professor Roberta Wue  
Chancellor's Professor Cécile Whiting  
Professor Roland Betancourt

2020



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## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

From the Modern Girl to Traditional Chinese Landscapes: Lang Jingshan's Art Photography in  
Republican Shanghai (1911-1949)

by

Chuqing Zhang

Master of Arts in Art History

University of California, Irvine, 2020

Professor Roberta Wue

This thesis aims to explore the various stages of Lang Jingshan's photography from the modern girls, cityscapes to his well-known composite photographs during Republican Shanghai. Photographs that he submitted to popular magazines before the 1940s were often neglected in the media when one tries to tell a story about Lang. Thus, I will reveal his experiments in various photography styles, genres, and show that he was a complex artist who was not only an advocate for Chinese culture. The first section of the works I discuss is his portraits of modern Shanghai women published in popular magazines. These artworks celebrated modernity in Shanghai and exposed Lang's role as a trendy photographer. The second group of photographs is of scenes of the city, which Lang Jingshan focused on portraying modernity in Republican Shanghai to popular media. The third and last group of photographs is typical examples of Lang's composite photographs exhibited in western art salons that resembled traditional Chinese paintings. These aspects of his style not only showed the process of his photography development but also that he was conscious of the art scene during the Republican period and that he tailored each style with different audiences in mind.

## Introduction

The National Art Museum of China received a generous donation of photographs by Lang Jingshan 郎静山 (1892-1995) from his daughter, Lang Yuwen 郎毓文, in October 2013. The NAMoC hosted a photography exhibition centered on Lang's works, the first significant display of Lang Jingshan's work in mainland China since 1949.<sup>1</sup> Out of the 134 works received by the NAMoC, the majority were Lang's *jijin* or "composite photographs," and all the photographs dating to the 1930s or later except for one nude taken in 1928.<sup>2</sup> The artworks cover mostly Lang's later career after 1949. This collection focused on celebrating Lang's darkroom techniques of modifying negatives. The composite photographs relied on technical production because the photographer has to plan out the composition correctly, select appropriate proportioned sections of photographs, and block out the unwanted parts carefully. The exhibit celebrated Lang's role as the first photographer in China to take a nude photograph and his relationship with famous figures through portraits of artists and celebrities. Lang Yuwen participated actively in protecting and showcasing Lang Jingshan's reputation after he passed away in 1995. Thus, the donations showed a carefully curated view of Lang Jingshan to mainland Chinese audiences for the first time. It established Lang's identity and legacy as a

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<sup>1</sup> "This is the first large-scale display of sixty years of Lang Jingshan's photography in mainland China, with many of his works appearing in front of viewers for the first time." See National Museum of China, "Special exhibition of Lang Jingshan's photographic art debuts at the National Museum of China(郎静山摄影艺术特展亮相中国美术馆)," Accessed August 10, 2020. [http://www.namoc.org/xwzx/xw/2013/201310/t20131011\\_268279.htm](http://www.namoc.org/xwzx/xw/2013/201310/t20131011_268279.htm) (accessed August 10, 2020). Please note that all translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup> Lang Jingshan, *慎独无私*, 1928, photograph, 25.6x39.4cm. Published in Lang Jingshan, *Collection of Photographs of Nudes (人体摄影集)* in 1930. It was considered the first individually published nude photography album. From "慎独无私," The National Museum of China, accessed August 10, 2020, [http://www.namoc.org/xwzx/zt/langjingshan/langjinshan7/langjingshan/langjingshan/langjingshan/201404/t20140422\\_275966.htm](http://www.namoc.org/xwzx/zt/langjingshan/langjinshan7/langjingshan/langjingshan/langjingshan/201404/t20140422_275966.htm).

famous, artistic, and poetic photographer with his portraits of celebrities, manipulated photographs, and focus on traditional Chinese patriotic landscapes.

Whenever one googles Lang's name, the search engine turns up his *jijin* photographs. Some say he was an old-fashioned follower of traditional Chinese culture because he was always dressed in a classical scholar's gown.<sup>3</sup> Others praise his ability to show an authentic Chinese landscape through his photographs in the early twentieth century, a period when images of China by traveling foreign photographers often captured Chinese curiosities such as footbinding and opium smoking.<sup>4</sup> However, Lang was more than what popular opinion assumed. Lang Jingshan was a curious and forward-thinking artist who chose a traditional style to rebut current theories in western countries about China; at the same time, he was someone who excelled at advertising himself. I have chosen to discuss his photographs of women in Shanghai, Shanghai cityscapes, and his later composite photographs, and my thesis will reveal his experiments, interests, and complexity as an artist; he is too often seen in a narrower scope and fixed to a particular identity that his family has shown the public: a spokesman for Chinese culture. However, Lang Jingshan was not simply a nationalistic photographer, he was also invested in the art of photography. It seems that he had interests in almost every genre and many styles of photography, including still-life, nature, landscape, cityscape, portraits, news, nude, and more.<sup>5</sup> The photographs he

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<sup>3</sup> Yuwen Lang and 一条 Yit, "The First Chinese Photojournalist," Interview, June 25, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNfqB1I4pic>

<sup>4</sup> Taiwan Macroview TV (台灣宏觀\_典藏版), "Lang Jingshan fused Chinese painting techniques to influence the development of art photography (郎靜山融合中國畫理 影響攝影藝術發展(來賓: 教授陳學聖與攝影家周以武)), 文人政事 *Art Profile*, August 12, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3W-rBYRbmQ&t=173s>.

<sup>5</sup> Some examples of his works in these different genres include his still life, **Still Life: Lang Jingshan, Fangchun fanmeng** 方春藩萌, 1927. "天马八展摄影出品方春沈萌 (The Eighth Tianma Exhibition published Fangchun shenmeng) sic.," 天棚画报 *Tianpeng pictorial*, 1927, 4.

submitted to *The Young Companion* and various other magazines during the early twentieth century showed that he had tried it all. It seems intriguing that most of his other photography genres were neglected when scholars examined his life or recounted his achievements.

## Biography

Growing up in a time of change, during the end of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and the start of the Republic in 1912, Lang Jingshan was the first in many things. According to his daughter, he was the first photojournalist in China, the first Chinese photographer to take a nude photograph, and the first to send his photographs to foreign exhibitions.<sup>6</sup> Those were the accomplishments that Lang was mostly known for; with these achievements, one would assume that Lang Jingshan was born to a merchant or wealthy middle-class family. However, Lang Jingshan was born to a Qing military official family, and he had an open-minded father who owned western curiosities, such as cameras.<sup>7</sup> He learned photography from his art teacher in Shanghai when he was twelve years old, and started to work in 1911 with advertisements and photojournalism at *Shenbao*, also known as the *Shanghai News*. Lang established an advertising company called Jingshan's Advertising [Jingshan guanggaoshe] in 1919 and operated it for about thirty years. In addition to advertising photography, Lang also worked as a photojournalist for the newspapers *Shanghai News* and *Shibao*. His photography was first showcased in an exhibition and published in the press in 1920 when he was twenty-eight years old.<sup>8</sup> In 1927, two

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**Nature:** Lang Jingshan, A December Morning, 1927. Lang Jingshan, “早上 (A December Morning),” *图画时报* (*Pictorial Times*), 1927, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Yuwen Lang, The First Chinese Photojournalist, Interview, June 25, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Lang, The First Chinese Photojournalist, Interview, June 25, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Kin-keung Lai and 黎健強, “The Life and Art Photography of Lang Jingshan (1892-1995),” <http://Hub.Hku.Hk/Bib/B30230214>, 2000, [https://doi.org/10.5353/th\\_b3023021](https://doi.org/10.5353/th_b3023021).

of his photographs were published in *Liangyou* or *The Young Companion*, "the most cosmopolitan and comprehensive periodical in the first half of the twentieth century that managed to capture almost every aspect of the kaleidoscopic life of Shanghai."<sup>9</sup> He also founded the photographic society Huashe in 1927 with his photographer friends, such as Chen Wanli 陈万里 (1892-1969), another pioneer of Chinese photography in the Republican era.<sup>10</sup> Huashe was one of the most influential Chinese photographic societies of the twentieth century, hosting many exhibitions with Lang Jingshan's artworks as well as others' works. Lang always had an interest in careful composition and art photography. Although he did many portraits and photographs for journalistic purposes which were meant to document events and suit newspapers' needs, he often participated in Huashe exhibitions and submitted art photographs to magazines.<sup>11</sup> In 1928, he was also known as the first photographer in China to portray a female nude, it was considered a liberating move in photography from portraits and advertisements to art, and a celebration of modern Shanghai culture. Through his experiences with photojournalism, art photography, and photographic societies, Lang Jingshan was able to experiment with a variety of techniques and styles during the 1920s. He was conscious in setting up perfect compositions, and the same meticulous style can be found later in his composite photographs as well.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, Lang Jingshan experimented with many subjects and styles of photography such as landscape, cityscape, portraiture, news, and still life. They seem

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang, eds., *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945* (Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Huashe 华社 or Zhonghua sheying xueshe 中华摄影学社 (the China Photographic Study Society).

<sup>11</sup> From a search in National Index to Chinese Newspapers and Periodicals 全国报刊索引 (1833-1992): His name appeared as the author or artist 884 times in Republican publications from 1911 to 1949. 6 times from 1911 to 1919, 145 times from 1920 to 1929, 497 times from 1930 to 1939, and 236 times from 1940 to 1949. Most of these labeled him as the artist of photographs that has been featured in these publications.

like distinctly different genres but Lang's attention to detail and composition is rooted in every one of his works. During the 1930s, Lang Jingshan became more interested in China's international image partly because of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945 or 1937-1945), and later complained of the bad images that western photographers often captured of China, such as "foot-binding, *Majiang* [mahjong], [opium] smoking, and executions."<sup>12</sup> Thus, he strove to showcase Chinese beauty to foreign audiences. Due to possible intensifying war efforts against Japan, and misunderstanding that Lang believed western audiences held of China's image, he decided to use traditional Chinese painting rules to create a unique photographic style.<sup>13</sup> His first *jijin* photograph, *Majestic Solitude* (1934), was successfully displayed in several international exhibitions as a Chinese artwork. As he recounted in the 1990s, he wanted to leave an impression on international exhibitions as a Chinese artist, and surpass other foreign photographers, believing it was hard to surpass western photographers as photography originated in the west. It was thus important to create photographs that were uniquely Chinese to surpass its forerunners:

... [*Jijin* photography] has aspects of creativity, it is artistic, an art form that is completely Chinese. Since photography came from science, when we learn to take photographs, we are always following others [foreigners]. Even if you could make your photograph the

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<sup>12</sup> Quote from Lang: "Because it seems that when foreigners come to China to take photographs, [they] always take pictures of ordinary habits, such as feet-binding, mahjong, smoking, this kind of thing. Also, the kind of executions. All gruesome photographs, [thus] they cannot understand the real Chinese culture. Because of those [factors], I started this photographic organization with my colleagues in the newspaper office, [we] advocate for art photography, and we send positive photographs to foreign exhibitions. Therefore, in Shanghai for about fifty years, I specifically sent photographs to international salons hundreds of times". See 因为感觉外国人来中国的照相照得都是一种普通的习惯，有什么缠小脚了，打麻将，抽鸦片这种事情，还有这一种受刑的照相，很难看的照相，没有中国这个真正的文化他们不能了解，这样子所以我在报馆里大家同是就发起这个摄影学会，提倡摄影艺术，我们把好的照片送到外国去展览。所以在上海我有五十年的历史，专门在这个照相到国际上影展有好几百次。Lang Jingshan and Taiwan Macroview TV (台灣宏觀\_典藏版), "Lang Jingshan fused Chinese painting techniques to influence the development of art photography - interview with Lang Jingshan."

<sup>13</sup> Long Chin-San, *静山集锦作法 (Techniques in Composite Picture-Making)*, (Taipei: China Series Publishing Committee, 1958). Unpaginated.

same quality as [others], no matter how good [one] is at photography, it is still [something] learned from others.<sup>14</sup>

With these nationalistic values in mind, he established the Sanyou [Three Friends] Photographic Society with Huang Zhongchang 黄仲长 (1900-1988) and Xu Zuyin 徐祖荫 (dates unknown) to show the western audiences a better image of China. In the six years Sanyou was in existence, they sent thousands of photographs to about thirty countries, with more than two thousand of their photographs featured in no less than two hundred foreign exhibitions.<sup>15</sup>

In the later years, after he moved to Hong Kong then Taiwan in 1949, he continued to produce *jijin* artworks, nudes, advertisements, and portraits. He remained curious about different trends in art throughout his life and tried to use various mediums such as wires and acrylic to manipulate his negatives in the darkroom.<sup>16</sup> His habits, styles, and passion for photographic societies persisted even through the shift of government in China when the Communists took over China in 1949, and Lang Jingshan moved to Taiwan to continue his artmaking. His persistence and style of photography earned him many memberships, such as an honorable membership in the Association Belge de Photographie et de Cinematographie, awarded when he was forty-six years old.<sup>17</sup> In addition to his passion for introducing "Chinese style" photographs to foreign audiences through exhibitions and salons, Lang also published photographic

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<sup>14</sup> See 我就把这个照片各种底片，采取它一部分，然后自己创造一个构图，那么这个是有创造的，是个艺术性的，完全中国的艺术。摆在这个科学发明的照相上面，否则我们学照相，永远跟着人家跑，就是照得一样，照得再好，还是跟人家学的。Lang Jingshan and Taiwan Macroview TV (台湾宏观\_典藏版), "Lang Jingshan fused Chinese painting techniques to influence the development of art photography - interview with Lang Jingshan."

<sup>15</sup> Long Chin-San, *静山集锦作法 (Techniques in Composite Picture-Making)*, 1958. Unpaginated.

<sup>16</sup> Lang Yuwen, "The First Chinese Photojournalist," Interview, June 25, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Lai, *The life and art photography of Lang Jingshan (1892-1995)*, 239.

monographs, some in Chinese but many in both Chinese and English.<sup>18</sup> Through his consistent efforts in his later composite photographic style, persistence in showcasing his works outside of China, and his well-established relationships with fellow artists, we can see an artist who understood the new diverse artistic and social circles in Republican Shanghai and was able to tailor his works to his audiences' needs.

Lang Jingshan was active in Shanghai during the early 1900s; it was a period of progress, new exposure to western culture, and a search for what it meant to be Chinese. During the Qing dynasty, people were imperial subjects, gaining citizenship and civic responsibilities for the first time under the new Republic.<sup>19</sup> With the shifting role of citizens and new forms of artistic freedom, Lang Jingshan was in contact with many western artistic styles and techniques. He was also active in Shanghai's foreign concessions.<sup>20</sup> Thus, with the many materials available to him, and many new political and social concepts that he could take on as part of his artistic expression, he was able to explore styles and subjects that were not possible before the end of the Qing dynasty. Although Lang Jingshan and his family decided to later focus on his nationalistic *jijin* photographs, in this early period of his career he did not have a single style. When one digs deeper into Republican-era Shanghai magazines and news, we can see that Lang Jingshan was a very complex photographer.

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<sup>18</sup> Selected examples of Lang's published monographs include:

*Symphony in Black & White*, 1947-1948.

*Techniques in Composite Picture Making by Chin San Long* 静山集锦作法, 1958. Unpaginated

<sup>19</sup> Louise Edwards, *Citizens of Beauty: Drawing Democratic Dreams in Republican China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020), 20.

<sup>20</sup> Jingshan Advertisement Company was located on Shandong Road in modern day Huangpu district. Shandong Road also intersects with Nanjing Road.

## State of the field

There are very limited analyses of Lang Jingshan's works, especially of his non-*jijin* photographs. The majority of writings focus on his achievements rather than formal analyses or interpretations of his earlier accomplishments. One of the earliest histories of Chinese photography, *Chinese Photographic History* 中国摄影史, published in 1987, surveys Chinese photographic history from 1840 to 1937 and it introduces major artists, styles, and historical events that influenced Chinese photography in this period. In comparison to other artists discussed in the book, none of Lang's artworks were mentioned, instead, the section on him only gives an overview of his awards and timeline.<sup>21</sup> In another Chinese photographic history book titled *The History of Photography in Shanghai* 上海摄影史, published in 1992, Lang Jingshan was also not emphasized artistically but socially. Again, only his achievements and significance were noted, rather than his specific works.<sup>22</sup> However, in other introductions of photographers in the same book, the authors listed and even interpreted some of his important works. In addition to the limited examination of Lang Jingshan's artworks, these books also neglected other genres in which Lang worked, labeling him only as a *jijin* artist who followed traditional Chinese painting styles and thus winning a place in international photographic history as a "Chinese artist." As Lang Jingshan was an important figure, it was normal for these books to include him and his achievements, but it was strange to see such a unified and yet incomplete view of this artist.

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<sup>21</sup> Hu Zhichuan and Ma Yunzeng, *China's Photographic History* 中国摄影史 (Beijing: China Photography Publishing House 中国摄影出版社, 1987), 180-181.

<sup>22</sup> Cai Jifu and Wang Tianping, *History of Photography in Shanghai* 上海摄影史 (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House 上海人民美术出版社, 1992), 22-23.

Later in 2000, Kin-Keung Lai wrote his dissertation on Lang Jingshan's life and photography. It is the first complete survey of Lang Jingshan's work. Lai gathered a vast amount of material and sources and presented readers for the first time with a detailed account of Lang's entire life and career. He mentioned the various stages that Lang Jingshan had gone through in terms of art photography. However, Lai was more interested in situating Lang in Chinese photographic history and his achievements through a social-historical perspective with more emphasis put again on Lang's *jijin* photographs.<sup>23</sup> It seems that Lang's works have become more widely accepted since the early 2000s, for example, as shown in Claire Roberts' *Exposures: Photography and China* published in 2013. Writers of photography history, like Roberts, started to include more examples of artworks and visual analyses of Lang Jingshan's work.<sup>24</sup> Although focusing still on the *jijin* photographs, there is a gradual change of attitude towards Lang's works.

Lang Jingshan's family also emphasized his role as a promoter of Chinese culture to western audiences, as shown through his daughter's interview and the photographs that his family decided to donate to major museums in China. Chinese critics like Bao Kun 鲍昆, a mainland Chinese art critic and photographer, argued in 2004 that Lang Jingshan was an escapist and that while his country was at war, he was busy in the darkroom, creating artworks that did not align with the political situation during the 1930s. He also accused Lang of using a self-Orientalizing gaze and stated that he lacked originality because of the repetitive style of the *jijin* photographs produced from the 1930s onward.<sup>25</sup> Mia Yinxing Liu, a professor at California

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<sup>23</sup> Lai, "The Life and Art Photography of Lang Jingshan (1892-1995)." diss.

<sup>24</sup> Roberts, *Exposures: Photography and China*, 83-84.

<sup>25</sup> Bao Kun 鲍昆, "A Recent Century of Snow, Moon, Wind, and Flowers (雪月风花近百年)" in *Guankan zaiguankan: Dangdai yingxiang yishu 观看再观看: 当代影像文化 (View and review: contemporary photography culture)* (中国文联出版公司, 2009), pp. 84-100.

College of the Arts, published an article in 2015 rebutting these points by examining Lang Jingshan's composites in their appropriate historical period and concluded that in these photographs, "contemporary concerns were present and sometimes paramount."<sup>26</sup> These photographs served different contemporary meanings when viewed from different points of views, such as being cultural ambassadors, pride, and beauty of China. The majority of debates have centered on Lang Jingshan's composite photographs, while his other works have been overlooked. I will examine his experiments, interest, and passion for politics that led to his shift to composite photographs. My thesis will focus on his consistency through different genres and styles to better understand a sophisticated photographer's progression throughout his seemingly diverse career in the turbulent years of Chinese history.

Lang Jingshan is widely known for his *jijin* photographs since those received more exposure than his other domestically facing works when the composites were sent to foreign exhibitions. The composite photographs often look artificial and conservative. However, they do not entirely define who he was. It might appear that Lang invented and shifted his style suddenly in the 1930s when he started doing his unique Chinese landscape composites. Although Lang Jingshan's earlier artworks were quite different from his *jijin* photographs, they still convey similar elements and attest to Lang's interest in progressive politics. All of the genres he has experimented with celebrated modernity in Chinese culture. Portraits of women showed their new position and rights in Shanghai during the early twentieth century, a shift from women's low social rank in imperial China. Many of Lang Jingshan's cityscapes were submitted to *The China Focus (Photographic Monthly)* or *Tianpeng* 天鹏 which was owned by Huashe and mainly

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<sup>26</sup> Mia Yinxing Liu, "The 'Emulative' Portraits: Lang Jingshan's Photographs of Zhang Daqian," *Trans-Asia Photography Review* 6, no. 1 (Fall 2015), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7977573.0006.106>.

published art and science photographs. These show that he experimented with styles such as pictorialism and with subjects celebrating Shanghai's modern cityscapes. Lastly, his *jijin* photographs showed that Lang was deeply interested in political events happening around him, and these distinctly Chinese depictions were developed during the chaotic years of the Second Sino-Japanese War. He sent out these *jijin* photographs to various overseas photographic exhibitions seeking to surpass Japanese competitors and to showcase what "true Chinese" beauty was to western audiences.<sup>27</sup> Through examining Lang's various genres and styles and by comparing his domestically facing photographs and composite images produced in the Republican period, we can see that Lang was a modern, trendy, commercial, and only rarely a traditional Chinese artist.

### **Republican Shanghai and its Print Culture**

Republican Shanghai saw many changes in politics, social roles, and artmaking with China's shifting position on the international stage. The early 1900s was a turbulent era. China had been under imperial rule for thousands of years, and it finally came to an end with the abdication of the last Qing Emperor in 1911. Citizens in China now needed to learn what it meant to live in a republic and to take responsibilities different from being subjects to a ruling family.<sup>28</sup> With more contact with the west and foreign concessions established during the 19th century in big cities like Shanghai, Chinese artists and scholars had more exposure to opportunities and resources from around the world. They also started to support democratic,

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<sup>27</sup> See Mia Yinxing Liu, "The 'Emulative' Portraits: Lang Jingshan's Photography of Zhang Daqian," *The Trans-Asia Photography Review* 6, no. 1 (Fall 2015), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7977573.0006.106>.

<sup>28</sup> Louise Edwards, *Citizens of Beauty: Drawing Democratic Dreams in Republican China*, Illustrated edition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020).

liberal, and modernizing policies such as the "Three Principles of the People" by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925). Art was a big part of the modernization process, and artists started to explore western styles, subjects, and media.

Popular cultural magazines also had columns specifically focused on introducing western artists, paintings, and photography.<sup>29</sup> As women were a significant conservative aspect of traditional Chinese culture, the freedom of women and feminism was an essential part of the modernization process of Republican Shanghai:

Morality, wisdom, physical agility, social, and beauty. The five desired aspects need to improve together. This is the criterion for electing the Queen of Carnival. These are also the necessary qualities when achieving the goal of being a good citizen. Many people are going toward the road of being a good citizen, but they are stuck before achieving their goal. That is because "The best is the enemy of the good." The more [we] perfect [the qualities], the more [we] feel empty. [If] everyone is like this, our world would be more beautiful day by day, and [it is] advancing unwittingly.<sup>30</sup>

The editor commented on the desired qualities of citizens in Shanghai according to the Queen of Carnival rules and stated that those were also important to practice in daily lives.<sup>31</sup> The editor's

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<sup>29</sup> "Death Masks of the Great," *Liangyou*, June, 1929, 26.

"Examples of Sculpture Made from Soap recently displayed in the Anderson Galleries in New York," *Liangyou*, June, 1929, 27.

<sup>30</sup> Quote by the editor found in No. 35, Feb 1929 issue of *Liangyou*: See 卷头语 德, 智, 体, 羣, 美, 五育齐发展, 这是嘉年华会选举花后的标准, 也就是我们做健全国民之鹄的。许多人已经向健全之路走去, 可是未达目的便不能再进了, 因为善为至善之大敌! 愈丰满, 愈觉得自己空虚, 人人如此, 我们的世界就一天比一天的美丽了, 而且不知不觉中就进步了。编者

<sup>31</sup> The Queen of Carnival or *Huahou* was chosen solely based on their five qualities rather than status or education. The carnival tradition came from Roman times, and they are a representation of equality. Thus, when electing a queen at the Carnival, women of any age were considered. Original text from No.35, Feb. 1929 issue of *Liangyou*, 20: 嘉年华会, 起源于罗马, 寓平等之意, 欧美各国仿行之, 菲岛每年亦举行一次, 特建会场, 陈列各方物品, 今届会专函我国农商部, 邀请参加展览。会中有种种游艺, 每日参聚数万。最有趣者, 为选举花后, 其备选资格, 不分种族 (按今当选者系中国种) 不分门第, 无论小姐或夫人, 凡才貌并美, 品学优良, 交际广阔, 现居菲岛领土内者, 皆有被选权。当选者在会期内享特别权力, 闭会后, 则如退任总统, 与平民无异, 唯有社会上自必大负盛望也。

choice of Voltaire's quote on best and good instead of using the traditional Confucius quote that had the same meaning also hint at Shanghai's multicultural exposure at the moment. Comparing modern depictions and desires of women to traditional imperial paintings of women, Chinese traditions celebrated the women's modest role of being inside the house, but in Republican Shanghai, the beauty and social status of women were celebrated instead.<sup>32</sup> Famous women and ladies could now be featured in popular magazines such as the *Young Companion*, and advertisements used women as subjects to attract men's attention.<sup>33</sup> These overt displays of feminine beauty no longer seemed inappropriate in China during the Republican era; the "freedom" of women now represented the progressiveness of Shanghai.

Their modernity can be seen from their appearance and mentality, such as clothing, hairstyles, hobbies, transport, communication, and socializing. In addition, women would begin to make independent decisions regarding aspects such as marriage and career.<sup>34</sup> Depictions of modern women with their modern style, modern surroundings, and modern career positions can be found in mainstream magazines such as *Liangyou (The Young Companion)*.<sup>35</sup> *Liangyou*, the longest-running Chinese-English bilingual monthly pictorial, is an excellent example of the vitality of print culture in Republican Shanghai.<sup>36</sup> *Liangyou* claimed to be "the most attractive and popular magazine in China" and its location on North Sichuan Road within the American

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<sup>32</sup> Joan Judge, "The Republican Lady, the Courtesan, and the Photograph: Visibility and Sexuality in Early Twentieth-Century China," in *Portraiture and Early Studio Photography in China and Japan*, ed. Luke Gartlan and Roberta Wue (Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 193-210.

<sup>33</sup> Ellen Johnston Laing, *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early-Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (University of Hawaii Press, 2004).

<sup>34</sup> Edwards, *Citizens of Beauty*, 20.

<sup>35</sup> "Aviation," *Liangyou*, February, 1929, 11.

"Women," *Liangyou*, January, 1929, 20-22.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang, eds., *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945* (Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 2013), 1.

concession was close to many major companies and the center of publishing in central Shanghai; the popularity of its issues are evident.<sup>37</sup> It was one of a number of new pictorials covering a variety of topics that appeared during Republican Shanghai, also contributing to the popularity of press culture. Republican Shanghai print culture was deeply rooted in people's daily lives. Popular magazines had advertisements targeting both men and women from various social classes. They were also close to life by featuring wedding portraits, famous people, news, and even babies that were born in the same year.<sup>38</sup> In addition to the pictorials, artists also took advantage of the popularity of print culture and started publishing monographs that showcased their artwork. Aside from artistic photography monographs and pictorials, popular pictorials and advertisements featuring women were also a big part of Shanghai printing culture. These often feature women posing for companies such as cigarettes to attract their targeted clients. Thus, women were often featured in print culture as symbols for modernity by western companies and fashionably dressed women in advertisements indicated the progressiveness of Republican Chinese society.

Lang Jingshan submitted hundreds of photographs to Republican-era magazines such as *Pictorial Times* 图画时报 (1924-1935), *The China Focus* or *Tianpeng* 天鹏 (1928-1929), *Camel Pictorial* 骆驼画报 (1928), *Violet* 蔷薇 (1925-1930), and various other publications. *The China Focus* was of particular interest. His photographic society, Huashe, was the founder of *The China Focus pictorial*. The *Tianpeng* is the pinyin name of *The China Focus*, it can be separated into two characters -- *Tian* means meaning sky, and the *peng* means "fabulous bird." In the

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<sup>37</sup> LPickowicz, Shen, and Zhang, *Liangyou*, 2-4.

<sup>38</sup> "The Wedding Ceremony of Mr. Li Tsung-kan, architect, and Miss Chow Shu-pin, daughter of Mr. Chow Ma-chuan, the well-known stamp collector," *Liangyou*, March 1929, 29.

"Match made in Heaven," *Liangyou*, April, 1929, 21.

*Zhuangzi*, a classical Daoist book dating to the Warring States period (475 BCE-221 BCE), one anecdote entitled "Wandering Beyond the Boundaries," describes the *Peng* as a legendary bird which could travel vast distances and came to be a metaphor for those having great goals and future.<sup>39</sup> *Zhuangzi*'s article listed a few creatures and people with worries and achievements in life and wanted to show that true freedom and happiness could only be achieved when one stopped caring about the mundane world. Therefore, *Tianpeng* could be an auspicious title that referred to the fabulous bird who has a great future and aligned with *Zhuangzi* on the freedom of art-making to gain true happiness.

*The China Focus* was a short-lived publication and it was in print for only a year, from 1928 to 1929. Huashe's involvement in *The China Focus* also explains Lang's many pieces in the magazine. As a photography magazine, it had a firm criterion for accepting submissions, accepting only "scientific photographs" and "art photographs."

Photography artworks can be divided up into two categories: scientific and artistic. Art photography includes still-life, landscape, portraiture, etc. Scientific photography includes astrophotography, lightening, etc. [These] must be shot with scientific ways, and cannot be shot with simple mirrors.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Zhuangzi. *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Hackett Publishing, 2009.

"Wandering Beyond the Boundaries," title translated from *Xiaoyao you* 逍遥游 by Steve Coutinho.

Coutinho, Steve. "Xiao Yao You: Wandering Beyond the Boundaries." *Zhuangzi and Early Chinese Philosophy*. Routledge, March 2, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315233239-11>.

<sup>40</sup> This magazine welcomes submissions

This photo magazine is specially made for the research of photography. It aims to gather as broad of content as possible so it would not have missed any precious artworks. Except for the famous people that will be giving the magazine submissions and passages, [we] welcome everyone around China to submit [their artworks]. See 本刊欢迎投稿 本刊为国内专门研究摄影之杂志。其内容自当广微博采。俾无遗珠之憾。除特约知名之士。按期为本刊共给作品摘书文字外。倘承海内摄影诸君。惠予投稿。不胜欢迎。今订条例如下。一、摄影作品可分美术科学二端。美术摄影。如静物风景人像等。科学摄影如天文光电等。须以科学方法始能摄入非单易镜箱所可得成。二、美术摄影仅需题句。如不能题者。可述明摄取时意旨所在。由本刊代题。科学摄影需述明摄取方法。以供研究。三、摄影文学。约分经验学理技术发明等。凡关于摄影之制造研究评论。亦所欢迎。文字需用文言。以简短为贵。每篇至长约限一千字。四、文字需缮清

Lang Jingshan submitted many photographs of his as "artistic photographs." They all followed the rules for art photography submissions:

Art photography only needs taglines. If [you] cannot offer a tagline, the magazine can include one [for you]. Scientific photography needs to explain the photography process for examination [or research] purposes.<sup>41</sup>

As shown in the submission rules, The China Focus tried hard to offer a platform for photography lovers to communicate through high-quality reproductions. It was a great example of the experiments and passions held by many Shanghai artists, journalists, and the press as it was one of the best magazines that treated photographs like artworks with full-page reproductions on coated paper.<sup>42</sup>

### Modern Women

As an artist, Lang Jingshan took on the role of being a modern photographer when capturing photographs of the city, people, and their lifestyle. Many of his subjects were modern women freed from traditional domestic spaces. Women in cosmopolitan Shanghai were now encouraged to take on more roles as they became almost a determining factor of how modern

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楚。引用英文名词。必须附译。如需附图说明。请以墨笔绘就附下。以使制版。五、凡投寄之稿。如确有价值。本刊自必乐于发表。唯何期可刊。未能预定。[ ]延时日。在所难免。请勿以本刊尚未刊载。投寄他处。致有重复之嫌。六、投寄稿件。以现金及本刊为酬。酬率不能定例。视稿件价值从丰酌奉。唯须于来稿注明姓名地址。加盖罚章。以便领酬时核对。七、来稿刊载与否。一律可以退还。唯须预先声明。并附足回件邮费。方可照寄。八、来稿请寄上海河南路一八三号天鹏艺术会天鹏编辑部收。

"This magazine welcomes submissions [本刊欢迎投稿]," *Tianpeng* 天棚, July, 1928, 47.

<sup>41</sup> "This magazine welcomes submissions [本刊欢迎投稿]," 47.

<sup>42</sup> Lin Zhipeng 林志鹏, "Preface", *Tianpeng* 天鹏, July, 1928, 5.

Shanghai had become during the Republican period.<sup>43</sup> This liberation leads to many new trends and depictions of women that have not been seen before, such as published portraits, and features in art photographs. They now have a significant presence in Shanghai magazines, photographic albums, and advertisements that are circling in public.<sup>44</sup> Thus, Lang chose to take various genres of women photography, whether for art's sake or commercially.

My discussion below focuses on three examples of Lang's studio photography, commercial photography, and art photography. The subjects were all women, and in these cases, they were used to show Shanghai's progressiveness, but each involved a different theme and visual language from political universality to eye-catching advertising. *An Adherent of "San Ming Principles"* 三民主义的一个信徒 depicts a posed woman reading Sun Yat-sen's democratic "San Ming Principles." The image celebrates women's ability to read and supports Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People." *Longing*, an art photograph by Lang, featured female subjects as well. A mother and daughter are once again dressed in modern clothing with chic hairstyles. However, this photograph shows Lang Jingshan's artistic side because of its composition, the circular frame, and Lang's play with light and shadows. *The sights and sounds of spring are eternal* [春光无限好] was published as the cover of a *Liangyou* issue in 1945. It is a typical commercial photograph, but like the other two images, Lang captured the beauty of modern women in Shanghai. These photographs all displayed Shanghai's modernity and openness towards women. Throughout the era of change, Lang as a commercial photographer

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<sup>43</sup> Maura Elizabeth Cunningham, "The Modern Girl in Motion: Women and Sports in *Liangyou*," in *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945*, ed. Paul Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang (Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 2013), 95-110.

<sup>44</sup> Joan Judge, "The Republican Lady, the Courtesan, and the Photograph: Visibility and Sexuality in Early Twentieth-Century China," in *Portraiture and Early Studio Photography in China and Japan*, ed. Luke Gartlan and Roberta Wue (Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 194-210.

was aware of the politics surrounding him, and he adjusted his artworks accordingly for domestic and western audiences. His role as a professional studio photographer was present in the first photograph as it was a posed scene of woman following politics, the second photograph showcased Lang's ability to turn portrait photography into art rather than documentation, and the third photography hints at Lang Jingshan's ability to make eye-catching advertisements.

Lang Jingshan worked as a news photographer in the early days of his career. He took a photo of a woman reading the famous "San Ming Principles" in 1927, which was published in *The Eastern Times Photo Supplement* 图画时报. This photograph displays a modern woman actively participating in current events. It is titled *An Adherent of "San Ming Principles"* 三民主义的一个信徒 in both English and Chinese. The need to translate a simple sentence in the magazine hints at how Shanghai was an international city at the time, and the multicultural audiences its popular culture faced. Sun Yat-sen developed the "Three Principles" with an emphasis on nationalism, democracy, and the livelihood of the people. It was the foundation of the Nationalist government during this time, and it was also taught in school as a required course. The "Three Principles" gave people rights and responsibilities, asking them to offer their opinion about the country. They were now being treated as citizens rather than mere subjects as in imperial times.<sup>45</sup> This image depicts a typical modern woman. Firstly, she is dressed in a *qipao* and has a neat short hairstyle.<sup>46</sup> This type of dress was specific to the Republican period and based on the scholar's gowns. Traditional Confucian beliefs opposed haircuts because one's parents gave children their body and hair, and it would be unfilial to make changes or to cut one's

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<sup>45</sup> Edwards, *Citizens of Beauty*, 14-18.

<sup>46</sup> Qipao 旗袍, other translation: Cheongsam.

hair at will.<sup>47</sup> Thus it would have been unthinkable to maintain such a short hairstyle in earlier imperial eras. In this case, the short hairstyle may represent the liberation from traditional feminine roles which the women were fighting for in the new Shanghai.<sup>48</sup> It is also modern in the sense that the hairstyle is not modest, feminine, and proper anymore, it is not meant to attract the traditional male audiences. In addition, the bob was also at the forefront of the Euro-American hairstyle for the modern woman. However, due to her uniqueness and boldness, she would still attract the gazes of modern audiences which made the image effective with *The Eastern Times Photo Supplement's* targeted audiences. The lamp, doll, and her chair are not distinctly Chinese. They all appear to be westernized, which hint at the multicultural background and the cosmopolitan Republican Shanghai society. The woman in this photograph appears well-educated and is shown with stacks of books. However, Lang made the focus of this image very clear as all the titles of other books are unseen, forcing us to focus on the *Three Principles of the People's* title.

*An Adherent of "San Ming Principles"* is part of a larger spread with portraits of other important figures in Shanghai society. It was typical for popular magazines to feature well-educated or celebrated women, and these portraits were almost always labeled with the lady's name, status, occupation, and thus significance. When situating *An Adherent of "San Ming Principles"* into the larger context of women's images published in magazines, it seems strange that she does not have a name or label of status like the other women. The rest of the spread is a typical representation of what popular magazines usually featured -- portraits of women and men

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<sup>47</sup> According to *The Book of Filial Piety or the Classics of Xiao* 孝经 开宗明义章 by Confucius (551BCE-479BCE) that "our body, skin, and hair are all given by our parents. We need to cherish and protect these, because a healthy body and heart are the basis of being a good person. Thus, cherishing our body is the start of being filial". Original text: 身体发肤，受之父母，不敢毁伤，孝之始也。

<sup>48</sup> Maura Elizabeth Cunningham, "The Modern Girl in Motion: Women and Sports in Liangyou." 95-110.

from well-to-do families, more importantly with their names labeled as celebrity news images. To take other photographs in the same spread as examples, the top right photograph is about the marriage of a doctor and a Miss Lucile Hu. Miss Hu is dressed in a luxurious yet simple *qipao* with lace on her collar and a pearl necklace. Her hair is styled in a fashionable modern bob. The photograph on the bottom right is also a formal portrait of a military surgeon in the Nationalist Army named Dr. Yang Tsa-hwa. Both of the ladies are dressed in fine garments that showcase their status well. They are also gracefully and modestly posed in a typical photo studio. The emphasis of these types of photographs is on the identity of these important people, rather than what they are doing in the photograph. Thus, the identity of the lady in the “San Min Principles” photograph was possibly not important to the editors because the main focus of this image is that women are following politics.<sup>49</sup> Because of this policy, modern women are no longer confined to their traditional conservative gender roles thus, hinting at the progressiveness of the government. The photograph itself is also strangely artificial in the mood. As we can see from her pose and expression, she is not depicted in a casual setting where we have a glimpse of her life as an educated lady. She looks stiff and artificially posed. In addition to her pose, it is also strange that only one corner of the room is carefully decorated, and the plain background could even be a backdrop in a photo studio. This photograph shows Lang Jingshan in his role as a professional photographer creating a piece that his customers asked for. It also shows that he was actively involved in print culture and politics at the time from his knowledge towards how to create an eye-catching photograph and current political policies. Lang's understanding of current events, careful planning of elements to a particular photograph, and interests in policies would later

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<sup>49</sup> Thus, it is worth suspecting that the woman in *An Adherent of "San Ming Principles san min zhu yi"* could be a prostitute or a professional model posing for the sake of expressing the idea of this image.

contribute to his nationalistic motivation in creating traditional Chinese landscape composite photographs.

Lang Jingshan was not only interested in modern advancements, but he also experimented with traditional Chinese culture and art traditions in his artworks. He often relied on traditional Chinese language in his photographs' titles. For example, *Longing* [惆怅东风望燕归] was published in *The China Focus* and was taken by Lang in 1928. It features two figures, possibly a mother and her child. They are in a private setting and the image conveys a melancholy feeling because of the dim lighting and the lack of headspace. They are both dressed in *qipao* and wear modern bobs. The private space and the composition resembles the imperial genre of paintings of ladies waiting for their men, notably the *Yongzheng's Screen of Twelve Ladies* painted before 1723 of the Qing Dynasty.<sup>50</sup> The twelve ladies all sit in private spaces, whether it is their garden or the bedroom. They are often shown sitting and waiting for their husbands to return home. The long line of lonely women pining for their husbands celebrates the modest, proper, and virtuous traditional Chinese women.<sup>51</sup> The sense of melancholy and waiting is present in this Lang photograph as well. These women, no matter modern or traditional, are all situated in a private space depicted as waiting for their loved ones. Thus, it is reasonable to assume through their facial expressions that this pair in Lang's photograph may be waiting for someone. In addition to the visual elements, the name 惆怅东风望燕归 (*Longing*) also suggests the wait. The complete Chinese title could be translated into "longing for the north wind and hoping for the swallow's return." The north wind (*dongfeng*) signifies the direction in which the

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<sup>50</sup> Anonymous, "Yongzheng's Screen of Twelve Ladies." Before 1723. Hanging scrolls (originally mounted on the twelve panels of a screen). Ink and color on silk. Each 184 cm (H) x 98 cm (W). Palace Museum, Beijing.

<sup>51</sup> Lara C. W. Blanchard, "Huizong's New Clothes," *Ars Orientalis* 36 (2009): 111–35.

sun rises; thus, it refers to a very important element in Chinese culture. In this case, it refers to the most important figure in a household, possibly pointing to the husband. *Wang* means hoping. The last two characters belong to a common saying -- *jiuyan guichao* 旧燕归巢. It means that the swallows from the old days are returning to their old nest or "hometown." Thus, the phrase could serve as a metaphor for students returning home from studying abroad.<sup>52</sup> The practice of studying abroad was a new one. Therefore, the lady and her child might be waiting for her husband to be returning from studying abroad or simply waiting for her husband. It is typical for Lang to fuse modern and traditional Chinese elements, as seen in his more well-known composite photographs of Chinese landscapes.

Photographs published in this period were often rectangular or square, but Lang Jingshan experimented with a circular frame in this particular work. The circular frame rhymes with the lady and the child's haircuts, and the curves also contrast with the straight diagonal lines inside the photograph. The contrast suggests the softness of women as their curves match the circular frame. The photograph would be too strong with its original rectangular shape because of how direct the subjects are facing the audiences, in addition to the straight lines. However, by using a circular frame, Lang Jingshan presented the audiences with an image that captures the softness of feminine beauty but also their determination on the inside. *Longing* showed Lang Jingshan's ability to create cohesive and artistic pictorialist style photographs and his knowledge of traditional Chinese imagery. The waiting-woman is a very prominent theme in traditional Chinese artworks, and Lang puts his modern twist on traditional imagery showing his ability to manipulate traditional themes for his use.

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<sup>52</sup> *Xinhua Dictionary* 新华大字典 (商务印书馆国际有限公司 (Commercial Press International Co., Ltd.), 2017).

Lang Jingshan also did commercial photography for Shanghai magazines, including *Liangyou*. He took *The Sight and Sounds of Spring are Eternally Good* [无限春光好] in 1941 after he invented his composite photography. It shows that he did not abandon other styles and genres of photography altogether when he started to make his signature composite landscapes. Thus, he proves that his works were more diverse than what later viewers usually assume. This photograph is a cover image to a *Liangyou* issue.<sup>53</sup> This image, again, shows a modern and fashionable Shanghai woman. It is different from *Adherent of the "Three Principles"* as the woman in this image is provocative, straightforward, and playful. The red colors in this painting are used to lead the viewers' eyes from the bold *Liangyou* title to the red colors of the leaves above her head, lips, coat, and her shoes. Her red lipstick attracts our attention. Although she is not looking directly at the viewers, we can sense her ardor from her facial expression. Traditional depictions of Chinese women have little to no facial expressions and being able to hold a smile this big for a photoshoot is a modern move. She is dressed in a more westernized dress and coat that reveals her calves, which would be unthinkable in traditional culture, and here functions as a sign of her being a progressive modern woman. Similar to the previous depiction, her hair is kept short and styled in fashionable finger curls. Her open posture welcomes the view to look and shows that she is not shy and reserved like many of the depictions before the Republican era where women were "locked" inside their personal spaces with modest poses. The cave-like rocky setting seems like an invitation for the viewers to be curious about what is behind her. Thus, it is a smart way of getting the viewers to flip open the magazine since that would, in some way, be peeking through the opening of the cave. As we can see in the composition, Lang is very

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<sup>53</sup> "Wuxian Chunguanghao 无限春光好 (*The Sight and Sounds of Spring Are Eternally Good*)," *Liangyou*, 1941, 1.

interested in creating lines and shapes to balance out his photographs. The strips on the woman's dress resonate with the rock formations, and the rock on the left is balanced by the repeated pattern of an upside-down rock on the right. We can also see that the rocks are no longer specifically Chinese garden rocks but serve as a recognizable factor to Chinese eyes because garden rocks were an important auspicious symbol to traditional Chinese paintings, and they often appear in paintings. Lang Jingshan paid more attention to the composition and symmetry of this photograph to make it cohesive overall. In addition to the style of this painting, it showcases that Lang Jingshan did not discontinue his commercial photographs and his involvement in popular culture in Shanghai. It once again suggests that even though Lang was mainly producing conservative composite landscapes in the 1930s and 1940s, he was still the modern photographer. He knew about current events and followed current trends. Thus, it is more evident that Lang was probably not doing the composite landscapes because he suddenly felt the need to return to the roots of Chinese imagery, but for a modern reason.

### **Transition Photographs, Cityscapes**

Lang Jingshan was not only interested in the politics and progressiveness of Shanghai society, but he was also very enthusiastic about experimenting with photographic technology and popular western styles. *Study in Lines* 曲线美 and *Before the Race* 试马 are representative of art photographs that Lang experimented with prior to the 1930s. His attention to composition and artistic creation in photography were already present in this period. Like his photographs of women, his focus still lies in celebrating Shanghai modernity when capturing cityscapes and current events. We can see his careful arrangements of curves and lines in *Study in Lines* [曲线美], he not only celebrated Shanghai's busy cosmopolitan streets but also experimented with

different subjects, settings, and styles of photography. In *Before the Race* [试马] which he submitted to *Liangyou* in 1928, Lang Jingshan captured people preparing horses before a horse race in Shanghai. Horse racing was very modern and fashionable in Republican Shanghai, and many foreigners also attended horse racing events, such as Champion's Day events which were hosted “twice a year...and a contest among all the season’s winners.”<sup>54</sup> Thus, both of these photographs are examples of celebrating Shanghai's modernity while experimenting with different styles. They both resemble painterly styles. For example, *Study in Lines* echoes the impressionists' angle of depicting a busy street in a snapshot. Also, *Before the Race* resembles a traditional Chinese ink painting. Lang's carefully planned compositions and manipulated negatives enabled him to create photographs that resemble paintings. *Before the Race* was published in *Liangyou* as a full-page image and as part of the Huashe exhibition. *Study in Lines* was published in *The China Focus* as an art photograph. Both of these were artworks celebrating Shanghai's modernity along with Lang Jingshan's experimentation with different painting traditions, compositions, and light-and-shadow.

Lang Jingshan's interest in design and visual rhythm in his photographs is evident in his art photographs. In addition to the composition, the haziness of *Before the Race* also reminds us of pictorialism. He followed the pictorialist trend in taking photographs to create painting-like photographs. *Study in Lines* was another painting-like photograph which he submitted to *The China Focus* in 1929 as an art photograph. Like the carefully planned composition in his modern women photographs, he explored the idea of curves in this cityscape. The intention was to celebrate Shanghai's cityscape and its standing as a modern cosmopolitan landscape. *Study in Lines* has a clearly defined foreground, midground, and background. It captures a busy day in a

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<sup>54</sup> James Carter, *Champions Day: The End of Old Shanghai* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2020), 11.

modern city with people from various cultural backgrounds as is shown through the clothes and hats of figures crossing the bridge. It seems that Lang was interested in the repeated curves of the bridge openings. He plays with the curves of the buildings and the bridge, while the boats, street lamps are placed horizontally, making a clear contrast with the placid curves. Straight horizontal lines often cut the frame and present the viewers with a feeling of stillness. While the top of the bridge cuts through the frame suggesting the stability of the newly built concrete bridge, the bottom curves offer a sense of liveliness with its reclining curves. Lang also paid close attention to negative spaces, when the sky takes up the majority of the frame in photographs, we cannot help but feel a sense of serenity, but Lang achieved the opposite when taking this photograph. The buildings extend up the top edge of his frame, and the limited sky gives the photographs a busy feeling. Lang's manipulation of curves, horizontal, and vertical lines shows his skill in organizing a photograph's mood by carefully planning its composition which makes the photograph into an artwork.

The bridge is the modern-day Zhapulu Bridge 乍浦路桥 crossing Suzhou Creek.<sup>55 56</sup> It was located in concessions, thus this photograph could be a celebration of Shanghai's cosmopolitanism. The photograph was taken facing modern-day South Suzhou Road, and the two prominent buildings in the background are still intact today. The cream-colored building on the left side was a theatre and office building housing the Capitol Theatre 光陆大楼 and built in

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<sup>55</sup> Originally a wooden bridge built in 1873. Rebuilt in 1927 with concrete and steel (the version in Lang Jingshan's *Study in Lines*). Also known as the "second Garden Bridge of Shanghai" or 二白渡桥.

<sup>56</sup> Deng Ming 邓明, ed., *Survey of Shanghai 1840s-1940s* 上海百年掠影 (上海人民美术出版社, 1994), 58-60.

1928.<sup>57</sup> The theatre was a popular place for western films. In a report by the *North China Daily News* listing popular shows at local cinemas, it was especially noted that “The Battle of the Coronel and Falkland Islands,” ... continues to the attraction at this [Capitol Theatre] theatre.”<sup>58</sup> The building on the right was originally the offices of the Yee Tsoong Tobacco Co. 英美烟中烟草股份有限公司 built in 1920.<sup>59</sup> This photograph also revealed Lang Jingshan's participation in Shanghai's current events as he was commissioned to take a photograph with the Capitol Theatre in the frame right after it opened in 1928.<sup>60</sup> The commissioned version was called *New Shanghai* 新上海, it was taken from the same angle but in landscape, thus it focused more on the buildings and bridge than the composition in his art version. *Study in Lines* showed Lang's interest in experimenting with art photography and western styles and his interest in capturing daily lives around him while celebrating China's modernization during the early twentieth century.

Another example of Lang Jingshan's typical mixture of styles is *Before the Race* which was exhibited at the “Shanghai Saloon” with Huashe. The photograph was published in *Liangyou* in 1928, but Chen Wanli's inscription dates to 1917, thus the photograph could have been taken prior to 1917 which coincided with the rising popularity of the Shanghai Race Club. Horse races

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<sup>57</sup> “Zhapuluqiao: Cengjing de Fanhua Yu Xuanxiao Liwomen Bingbu Yaoyuan 乍浦路桥: 曾经的繁华与喧嚣离我们并不遥远 (Zhapulu Bridge: The Prosperity and Noise of the Past Are Not Far Away from Us),” 青年报, accessed August 17, 2020.

<sup>58</sup> British Naval Film 英国海军电影, The North-China Daily News, 1928 - 3- 17. The Capitol Theatre was very popular in Republican Shanghai popular media as it was mentioned about 171 times from 1928 to 1929, 320 times from 1930 to 1939, and 21 times in 1940 to 1949 in English alone.

<sup>59</sup> Information found on a heritage plaque located at the entrance of the building. Correct modern day translation -- British American Tobacco Company. <http://chuimushanren.com/index.php/archives/245/>

<sup>60</sup> Lang Jingshan, ““新上海” 上海博物馆路新桥及光陆电影院大楼 (‘New Shanghai’ Shanghai Bowuguan Road new bridge and Guanglu cinema building),” 北洋画报, 1928.

were important events in Republican Shanghai.<sup>61</sup> Celebrities of “Old Shanghai” and wealthy “Shanghaiers,” or foreigners who lived in Shanghai during the early twentieth century, often participated in racing competitions.<sup>62</sup> The subject itself hints at Shanghai as an advanced and modern city with foreign sporting events. The subject of horses is a modern one, but also one with a long tradition; horses were an essential subject in imperial court painting. Emperors commissioned court artists to paint horses to showcase their power and wealth. They not only show dominance over other countries as horses were often sent to China as tributes, but also the dynasty's capability to fight as the horses were also representations of military strength. In this case, Lang was announcing artistic freedom because his depiction of horses no longer serves as imperial propaganda. Instead, he enjoyed the liberty to compose and produce his version of horses as Chen Wanli's inscription suggests that the scene was picked not by a sponsor or an emperor but randomly by Lang. In addition, the horse now represents modernity and the horse racing business in Shanghai. Thus, the subject of *Before the Race* was very modern in terms of its direct conflict with traditional imperial horse paintings.

However, the composition, which includes an inscription as part of the artwork to balance out the main subject and Lang Jingshan's seal, also speaks to the Chinese painting tradition. Chen Wanli praised Lang Jingshan's technique of making an ordinary scene into a beautiful artwork in the inscription:

People who are passionate about photography say that it is not necessary for one to pick the scenery when their technique could achieve half the artwork.

Lately, when looking at Mr. Jingshan's work, [I] now believe that this saying is not wrong.

This photograph was shot in the stable, which is a bland setting.

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<sup>61</sup> “Shanghai Chunji Saima Rusaima Mingbiao 上海春季赛马入赛马名表 (Shanghai Spring Race Entry List),” *Shibao* 时报 (*Shanghai Times*), April 25, 1926.

<sup>62</sup> Carter, *Champions Day*.

However, the composition is very exquisite and delicate, the section of horses echoes with the grass. This scene can compare to what one sees in dreams, thus I am writing this inscription...”<sup>63</sup>

This resemblance overtly reminds the viewers how much the country had gone through from its thousands of years of imperial rule with horses as a military tool to showing Shanghai's progression during the early 1900s when horse race became representations of modernity. It shifted from being a tool to show imperial power, spiritual strength, and integrity to an entertaining communication event in Shanghai.<sup>64</sup> The popularity of horse racing grew with the degree of freedom that foreigners had within China. Horse racing started as early as 1637 in Macau when Europeans treated horse racing as a means to communicate. However, the Qing government had tight policies against foreigners prior to the 1800s, so horse racing remained small in scale. The turning point was after 1840 when European naval powers crushed the Qing

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<sup>63</sup> 试马

近人谭影者好言

择景之景何须择

妙手半成之耳

近见

静山先生作品

益信余言为不谬

此幅 在赛马室所摄<构>固

一平淡无奇之情景也

而构图极精妙

布局侧重上部别以草地一小区遥相呼应

此岂侈矣择景比如所梦见耶

为题数语以志 x 眼

<sup>64</sup> Robert E. Harrist, *Power and Virtue: The Horses in Chinese Art* (New York: China Institute, 1997).

navy, the emperor signed more treaties that allowed foreigners to roam rather freely in newly set up “treaty ports” such as Shanghai. With more open policies and an abundance of flatlands in Shanghai, Europeans, especially Englishmen, started to host horse racing competitions near the Huangpu District in Shanghai.<sup>65</sup>

Although the subject is distinctly western and modern, Lang Jingshan's use of blank spaces and the lack of ground were common in a lot of Chinese paintings. The horses and people in Lang's depiction are not as abstract as the almost pure brushstrokes in Chan paintings, still they can be considered rather abstract in the world of photography because they are presented in a hazy way, placed floating on the surface of the picture plane. *Before the Race* is a great example that showcased Lang's interest in the presentation of his artworks that would later feature in many of his most famous composite photographs. The subject of the Shanghai Race Club hints at Lang Jingshan's interest in modern trends and current events. This photograph is, once again, a mixture of modern and traditional Chinese styles. In a time where artists constantly try to grapple with the idea of being Chinese, Lang Jingshan had a distinct style that combined modern cosmopolitan Shanghai with traditional poetic Chinese painting styles.

Both of these photographs showcased Lang Jingshan's celebration of modern Shanghai. In addition to the intentional westernized subjects, he also was experimenting with different styles in these works. They represent Lang's searching for Chinese-ness in a fast-changing era in a fast-paced city. Compared to other works published in *Liangyou*, Lang Jingshan seemed to be most active in experimenting with different artistic traditions, and they showcase his early interest in utilizing painting styles in his photographic works. *Study in Lines* and *Before the Race* also showed Lang Jingshan's connection with friends, and his interest in various groups of people

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<sup>65</sup> Carter, *Champions Day*, 21-25.

residing in Shanghai at the moment. From the inscription of a fellow artist in *Before the Race*, and the location of the bridge in *Study in Lines*. They all hint at Lang Jingshan's interest in popular current events and his process of finding a unique Chinese photography style is also present in both of these works. Lang Jingshan carefully planned the light-and-shadow, lines and curves, and the composition in *Study in Lines* and *Before the Race*. Thus, both works show some similarities to Lang's later composite photographs in terms of organization, and style.

### Composite Photographs

Lang Jingshan was mainly known for his *jijin* or "composite" photographs which resemble traditional Chinese landscape paintings. The word *jijin* predates photography and originally referred to "collections of beautiful things."<sup>66</sup> One of the first uses of *jijin* was in chapter seventeen of the *Dream of the Red Chamber* 红楼梦 (mid-18th century) when the author described the interior decorations of a room. The direct translation of *jijin* as used in *Dream of the Red Chamber* is "collections of brocades." Thus, it explains Lang Jingshan's mindset, when creating his *jijin* photographs, that it centered on creating a combination of the best works that he had taken:

...we can now eliminate what is not wanted and add in what is lacking; we can now make up an ideal picture out of various individual photographs without losing any of the effects or qualities that are necessary to a photograph. Nature is often imperfect as the saying goes, and now it is within our power to perfect her.<sup>67</sup>

He took darkroom manipulation of the negatives to another level and created artworks that showed Chinese-ness in a way that was uniquely his. It was not uncommon for photographers to

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<sup>66</sup> Cao Xueqin, *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, trans. David Hawkes (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1996).

<sup>67</sup> Chin-San Long, *Techniques in Composite Picture-Making* 静山集锦作法, unpub.

modify their photographs in the darkroom, but Lang perfected this technique to create photographs that resembled traditional Chinese paintings. Lang Jingshan's first known composite photograph, *Majestic Solitude*, was made during the 1930s. It was a turbulent decade marked by the breakout of the Second Sino-Japanese war. The start of the war has been debated but some believe that it started on September 18th, 1931, with the Mukden Incident when Japanese troops took over large parts of northeast China; others believe that it started in July 1937 with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident when Japanese forces claimed that they lost a soldier and wanted to investigate in the nearby city. The Chinese refused and Japanese forces attacked the Marco Polo Bridge. These events showed that the 1930s were an intense period of Japanese involvement in China. The 1930s to 1940s was also the period Lang Jingshan sent most of his *jijin* photographs to foreign salons.<sup>68</sup> According to his post-1949 interviews, he wanted to show the beauty of China through his lens to western audiences:

Photography is a universal language. Thus, I have decided to use this strong universal language. Show the world how beautiful the mountains and hills of China are, how broad Chinese culture is, how virtuous Chinese morals are.<sup>69</sup>

Lang Jingshan always had the same explanation when he was interviewed about his composite photographs in the 1990s. However, it is reasonable to question whether he had the same intention sixty years before these interviews. His political intentions are still clear because he sent works abroad to spread Chinese culture. However, due to his vast interest in photography and the *jijin* works, I do not believe completely in the theory his family promoted in contemporary exhibitions and interviews as they neglected a section of Lang Jingshan's work

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<sup>68</sup> Chin-San Long, *Techniques in Composite Picture-Making* 靜山集錦作法, (Taipei: The China Series Publishing Committee, 1958). Unp. 1931 to 1940: 890 prints accepted. 1941 to 1958: 132 prints accepted

<sup>69</sup> *Chinsan Long's 100th Birthday Commemorative Photo Exhibition* 郎靜山百齡嵩壽攝影回顧集 (Taiwan: National Museum of History 國立歷史博物館, 1990), 15-17.

that was produced alongside the *jijin* works. It is possible that Lang was not only trying to be a promoter of Chinese culture and to surpass western photography techniques, as he has stated in interviews done in the 1990s. Instead, he was trying to make a nationalistic statement of undying China during a devastating war and attempting to capture the beauty of traditional culture in an age of fast-paced development and temptations of western culture. It seems that Lang Jingshan was interested in participating in western exhibitions and his contributions focused more on the Chinese landscape and homeland than cultural ideas as he claimed in the 1990s.

His composite photographs are generally flat and spaceless, and they have overly Orientalizing features that showed the western audiences a somewhat familiar view of traditional Chinese paintings. Also, they do not have distinctively different meanings and motifs like ancient Chinese paintings. Still, Lang's composites try to show the feeling and beauty of traditional Chinese landscape paintings. They are mere representations of Chinese landscape paintings rather than real Chinese paintings, since, like many traditional Chinese paintings, Lang Jingshan created a fantasy landscape that did not reflect any real places, and he included the necessary features such as mountains, woods, and rivers. He shared many ideas behind the creation of *jijin* photographs in *Techniques in Composite Picture-Making*. In the introduction to *jijin* techniques, he claimed to follow the *Six Canons* by Xie He (sixth century), which were essential when traditional Chinese artists produced artworks closely. He also tried to make sure that he included all the necessary formal elements of classic Chinese paintings, including the most important aspect -- spirit. Lang Jingshan also stated that “Chinese painting techniques have deep reasonings, [especially] Xie He of the Southern Qi's Six Canons. [It] is essential to *jijin*

photography; one cannot not learn the methods.”<sup>70</sup> <sup>71</sup> I will examine the typical works of Lang Jingshan's composite landscapes and showcase their similarities in being mirrors of Chinese landscapes.

Xie He's *Six Canons* include formal methods of the usage of colors, composition, and brushstroke types. Xie also pointed out the importance of copying the works of ancient masters, and most importantly, the *qi* or spirit. The meaning of spirit, according to Lang, was the liveliness of the spirit. He also pointed out that the spirit is central to any Chinese painting and it is the most significant aspect of traditional Chinese landscape painting.<sup>72</sup> As discussed previously, Lang Jingshan's previous role was a representative modern artist who published trendy photographs in popular magazines in Shanghai, thus he would not shift completely to a traditional Chinese style without putting more thoughts behind the process. It is possible to assume that he selected and divided his audiences into groups domestically and internationally and produced artworks for each of these groups. His landscape photographs usually depict mountains, trees, and objects that signify signs of human existence. They followed not only the

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<sup>70</sup> 中国绘画之总法则均有极深原理，南齐谢赫绘事六法、对于集锦关系至切，均不可不知。Chin-San Long, *Techniques in Composite Picture-Making* 静山集锦作法. Unp.

<sup>71</sup> Six Canons translated by James F. Cahill: Engender [a sense of] movement [through] spirit consonance.

1. Use the brush [with] the "bone method."
2. Respond to things, image (depict) their forms.
3. Adapt to kind, set forth (describe) colors (appearances).
4. Divide and plan, position, and arrange.
5. Transmit and convey [earlier models, through] copying and transcribing."

James F. Cahill, "The Six Laws and How to Read Them," *Ars Orientalis* 4 (1961): 372–81.

<sup>72</sup> "In Chinese painting traditions, the most important is its spirit. The spirit is not the most notable aspect in a painting, but it truly will make the painting seem lively and to a superb level. It has a sense of life, and the viewers will be touch by the spirit without speaking. Then we can talk about the spirit; one has first to include the spirit, then pursue liveliness." Quote from Chin-San Long, *Techniques in Composite Picture-Making* 静山集锦作法. Original text: 中国绘事中最重要为气韵，气韵之说，虽未十分显著，实在使绘画能精神活泼，出神入妙，有生命表现，一见而为人所感触，不言而喻，方可谈气韵，先有气韵，然后方可求生动。

six principles presented by Xie He, but also the long tradition of Chinese landscape painting since the Song dynasty.

The famous painter Guo Xi (1020-1090) discussed and painted essential elements of Song dynasty landscape paintings that can serve as identifiers to proper Song Chinese landscape paintings. These elements typically include mountains, rivers, trees, and signs of human life. The landscape paintings serve to cleanse one's spirit since it was hard for all the officials serving in court during imperial times to go physically into nature to learn about the fundamental ideals of being a gentleman. They were also political propaganda used by the government to promote social harmony among people, the government, and nature. Thus, landscapes were a common theme and tradition for Chinese painters to paint, and it had a long line of art historical conversations between artists through their artworks. Now during a time when people were struggling with the idea of being Chinese, landscape and its unique long-established ideologies in Chinese culture stand out to be a perfect representation of Chinese identity.<sup>73</sup>

Although Lang Jingshan's landscapes followed these traditions closely in terms of elements, his overall mood and spirits differed from traditional Song landscapes. His composite photographs represent a misty and unreachable world that the audiences cannot interact with; in contrast, Song dynasty landscapes offer the viewers paths to traverse in the landscapes. Thus, Lang Jingshan's photographs exist more as pictorialist artworks than representing the same religious and political ideas conveyed in Song dynasty landscapes. Therefore, even though Lang aimed at producing perfectly composed artworks that followed traditional Chinese ideals closely,

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<sup>73</sup> Kuo Hsi, "The Significance of Landscape," in *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, ed. Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih (Hong Kong University Press, 2012). 150-154.

his photographs are more likely to be an emblem of the concept of Chinese landscapes as a type rather than as individual artworks that each presents a moral ideal.

A photograph titled *Morning Breeze and the Lingering Moon* 晓风残月 can be used as a typical example of Lang's composite landscape photographs. Lang published it in one of his books called *Symphony in Black & White* in 1947, along with many other composite photographs, including landscape, animal, and portrait subjects. The vertical composition resembles a traditional Chinese ink painting with the mountains as the background, mists, water, hints of human life, and trees.<sup>74</sup> His typical style was to blend Chinese elements from traditional paintings together to create Chinese painting-like photographs. This idea aligns with Lang's belief that Chinese paintings are in a way, composite photographs as well:

I have furthermore discovered that here, once and for all, photography has approached the techniques of Chinese painting. Have not Chinese artists been making Composite picture all the time?<sup>75</sup>

However, Lang does not always succeed in recreating the *qi* and mood of traditional landscapes. His artworks seemed flat, mirror-like, and they do not include hidden meanings behind each motif like traditional Chinese landscapes. Instead, his composite photographs seem to show similar versions of the same idea repeatedly. He also did not try to capture the spiritual meaning behind traditional landscapes which were categorized as the essence of landscape painting by Xie He, and which even Lang himself emphasized on the in his book, but as he explained in the

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<sup>74</sup> As Dr. Cécile Whiting pointed out in the notes that the title *Symphony in Black & White* could be making a reference to James Abbott McNeill Whistler as Whistler titled his landscapes paintings with musical references that suggested the poetic and evocative musical nature of his landscape. Thus, as Lang Jingshan often emphasized on the spirit or liveliness of his *jijin* photographs, *Symphony in Black & White* might point to the poetic nature of his artworks.

<sup>75</sup> Chin-San Long, *Techniques in Composite Picture-Making* 静山集锦作法, (Taipei: The China Series Publishing Committee, 1958). unpaginated.

introduction, he was putting together beautiful segments into one artwork to make it perfect. Therefore, it is more important to analyze the overall intent of Lang's invention and his sudden shift to the international market than the spirit behind individual landscape composite photographs as they seem to be "mass-produced" works repeating the same ideas. *Morning Breeze and the Lingering Moon* belong to this category, it is divided into two major sections with the massive mountains in the background and a busier foreground. The lightest blank spaces resemble the look of mists in a landscape painting, while the slightly grey section in between the house and the tree resembles a lake fading into the distance in clouds.

Our eyes focus first on the tree as it is the darkest and busiest section of the photograph, then move as the branches reach to the right and upward to travel through the top of the frame. The mist-like clouds enclose the whole composition as we can see these light grey shapes in the foreground. They frame and separate our modern experiences from the idyllic and timeless landscape. This possibly relates to Lang's belief in the traditional six canons; the use of mists and clouds in his works may be the reflection of *qi* in Xie's rules. Alternatively, they can merely be his technique of composite photography as he has pointed out that the perfect elements are when mists surround the photograph, and this would be the easiest case for blending the elements into one unified artwork. Thus, the belief in *qi* and the ease of blending may be the reason why this photograph lacks firm ground.

Lang tried to convey a sense of depth by adding complex tones to the mists. However, the tones only separated different parts of the artwork rather than adding depth to the mirror-like surface. We can see the three layers through his use of mists, the top layer, and the clearest is the tree with its sharp edges and dark branches. Then as the mists cover parts of the house, the overall tone of the house fades a little compared to the tree. The house seems to be further from

the viewers because it seems to be covered in a thin layer of mist. Then our eyes rise to a big blank space, also mists. This mist distances us from the mountains. As Lang tried to blend each element into one unified artwork, we can still see traces that reveal the nature of a composite photograph. For example, the brushstrokes, as an essential aspect of Chinese painting, are missing in this photograph. Lines and shapes are clearly defined as the tree, house, and mountain are all in focus in their original photograph fragments.<sup>76</sup> The sense of depth was only created through the use of mists but not with atmospheric perspective. In many of Lang's composite photographs, the elements are all crystal clear. Even though he believed that the difference between the object in focus and the out-of-focus background was merely a limitation of the camera, the human eye can only focus on one part of a landscape as well. For example, in this case, if the viewer were to look at a real landscape, the house and mountain would be out of focus when we focus on the tree. Thus, the clarity made many of his composite photography seem artificial and flat.

It seems that meanings were not hiding behind art historical motifs and the composite photographs do not function individually as separate worlds that had different themes. Lang's composites seem like duplications of the same elements repeatedly. These works also do not engage with the audiences comparing to traditional Chinese landscape paintings. They are just there to represent an idea of Chinese landscape scene. Usually, in Chinese landscapes, we see a path leading us into space or an intentional obstacle that prevents us from entering someone's piece of paradise. However, in this case, the traditional elements of Chinese landscape seemed to

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<sup>76</sup> "Now we shall talk about how to join the pictures. You may either block out the unnecessary portions by covering the negatives with opaque paint, or by putting a piece of glass pasted with black paper between the projector and the bromide paper so as to shade the parts you do not want. They are both effective, though the former method ruins the negative. Use a piece of gauze of some kind of diffusing screen on the enlarger when making the print." Chin-San Long, *Techniques in Composite Picture-Making* 静山集锦作法. Unp.

be wrapped in clouds, inaccessible yet close to us. It feels that they are right in front of us, but not as a real landscape but a snapshot, a representation, or a painting. Lang Jingshan claimed that he was trying to produce something that would transcend photography, that required both technique and artistic creativity.<sup>77</sup> In addition, from his friendship with artists like Zhang Daqian 张大千 (1899-1983), and his interest in scholar culture, it is possible that he aimed at joining the long line of scholar painters who referenced and communicated with historical painters through including references of ancient artists' typical styles and develop these styles as their own. However, the end product seems that Lang was only trying to capture formal elements of Chinese paintings and to compose all the elements into a unified frame rather than communicating with any stylistic traditions. They seem more like two-dimensional images floating amidst the clouds. The clouds look like shelves that are holding and presenting the necessary "Chinese" elements from traditional paintings to its audiences.

His photographs are successful in that they present to western audiences elements that are essential to Chinese paintings. Another photograph called *Spring Fantasia* published in 1948 was composed from three separate photographs, one with the branches, one the boat, and the other the mountain behind mists. His technique is perfect in that there are no traces of separation between the three elements. However, he is making these almost as scientific experiments, and he thinks too much about what to put in them from his perfect sketches and well-developed techniques that he misses one of the most important parts of Chinese paintings: the *qi*, the spontaneity of the brushstrokes, and the emotions. In the modern age, where life became very fast-paced and with new interests in technical details in artmaking and scientific focuses of daily life, we can see Lang's photographs capture those aspects very well. He sought to create the most

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<sup>77</sup> Chin-San Long, *Techniques in Composite Picture-Making* 静山集锦作法. Unp.

"Chinese" photographs that he can with composite photography. He does have all the elements to the *Six Canons*, and he knows well about the composite medium to the point that it is hard to find flaws and traces of edges in his composite works. He also tries to be perfect and eliminate any disadvantages of the camera or human eye, such as the shifting focus. However, Chinese paintings are there not to show their audiences a clear depiction of the scenery but are there to represent a greater hiding behind complex motifs. Nonetheless, Lang was not following the ancient Chinese artists, he had different intentions on representing a nationalistic idea during the Republican era, not with individual works, but with the entire collection of composite photographs. In this photograph that was originally based on a poem by Liu Yong 柳永, he included all the aspects of the poem but missed the mood and emotion of the poem as ancient artists like Guo Xi would emphasize.<sup>78</sup>

From these formal elements, we can tell that Lang had a clear intention of what he wanted to present to his western audiences that seems to answer the question of "Chinese-ness." It also seems that he was not interested in showcasing Song dynasty Daoist traditions, hierarchical imperial political ideals, and scholarly metaphors like those in ancient dynasty paintings. He was merely trying to create 'perfect' landscape photographs and to present a statement that is an epitome of Chinese landscape paintings throughout the ages. Lang Jingshan was not creating these photographs to join artistic conversations with ancient Chinese painters but was trying to show a clear image of elements and the beauty of traditional Chinese landscapes to western audiences, and perhaps to the contemporary Chinese audiences as a

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<sup>78</sup> "Description: This is an interpretation of a poem by the famous "Sung' poet, Liu Yung. The poem tells of a lovers' parting. They spent a night together on the boat, with wine and with tears. They bade farewell to each other just before the dawn came. The lover was left in a cold and dreary only by the willow which stood on the bank all by itself, with thousands of "strings of love" yet not one of them could tie up the beloved for him." See Chin-San Long, *Techniques in Composite Picture-Making* 静山集锦作法. Unp.

nationalistic image of pride. Thus, he selected subjects and styles from famous Chinese landscape paintings both from court and scholarly backgrounds to show the foreign audiences a sense of Chinese-ness that they cannot easily gain access to before the Republican period. The self-Orientalizing process is a method for Lang to show the audiences a more understandable and cliched representation of Chinese artistic traditions. These nationalistic landscapes also remind the Chinese audiences during wartime of the pride and traditions of China. They functioned like the hinterland landscape photographs that he sent from Sichuan to Shanghai under Japanese attack, which tried to lift people in Shanghai's spirits.<sup>79</sup>

When asked about his intentions, Lang Jingshan always had the same explanations when he was interviewed about his composite photographs in the 1990s. However, it is reasonable to question whether he had the same intention sixty years before these interviews. The political intention was still clear because he consciously sent works abroad to spread Chinese culture. However, due to constant political changes domestically and internationally, it would be less likely that the theory, his family promoted in contemporary exhibitions and interviews, is still accurate. As they often neglected a section of Lang Jingshan's work that was produced alongside the *jijin* works to create Lang's image. It seems that Lang's *jijin* works in the 1930s had more meaning than merely show Chinese beauty to western audiences. Instead, he was possibly also trying to make a nationalistic visual statement of an undying China during a devastating war and capturing the beauty of traditional culture in an age of fast-paced development and temptation of westernization. Therefore, Lang Jingshan's global campaign focused more on the Chinese landscape and homeland than cultural ideas like he had claimed in the 1990s.

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<sup>79</sup> Yinxing Liu, "The 'Emulative' Portraits."

During the turbulent era and with Lang's interest in modernity and politics, he was possibly promoting the beauty of China in traditional visual terms as the Japanese were taking over Chinese territories to prove that they could never own China?, even though they had taken many regions. In the same period, left-wing artists created woodblock prints that were radical, bold, and negative, in terms of classic Chinese beauty, to help with the war effort. Lang Jingshan created beautiful and timeless Chinese imagery to label the lands as Chinese and showed others that the long line of traditional Chinese painting created within these mountains is undying no matter how much land the Japanese have taken over. Those works promote nationalistic pride, educate Western audiences about the beauty of Chinese culture, and affirmed the sovereignty of Chinese lands with these seemingly calm and distinctly Chinese landscapes. The *jijin* format enabled Lang to include photographs taken from different regions of China into one artwork that shows the Chinese-ness that had unified supremacy over different areas. His artificial yet unified style provides the western audiences a unified and easily recognizable image of China. Thus, making it easier for them to grasp the idea of being Chinese. Lang's repetitive photographs represented the Chinese traditional landscape painting style.

Lang Jingshan's composites were often viewed as separate from his earlier experimental works, or the other styles would be neglected when examining Lang's career completely. This is possibly due to the uniqueness of his composites, the positive intentions which led his family to promote the *jijin* photographs, and the international fame that these composite photographs had. However, his experimental and even commercial works are important in understanding him and his composite photographs. The evolution of Lang Jingshan's work can be seen from different stages of his creations, and that the composite photographs were not a sudden development due to the unsettling war in the 1930s. However, the composite photographs were already

foreshadowed in Lang's earlier attempts at art photography, as were his ambition in expressing political and current debates in his seemingly otherworldly artworks. Lang Jingshan's photography and the societies he had formed showcased that he was conscious of what different audiences wanted to see and that he wanted to contribute to the development of photography in China. Thus, he created his photographic works according to the needs of his audiences to express his ideas. Lang's unique photographs could have been different enough to capture his intended audience's eyes, and they were successful in their own ways in presenting Lang's political ideas, whether it was to confront old ideologies on art photographs, artistic freedom, women's position in modern society, or western views of China.

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